DIM / CIM Conference, Albuquerque, NM
By Richard Pitruzzello

The information contained in this newsletter is on some of information technology projects, programs, and policies addressed at the DIM/CIM Conference held in Albuquerque District (SPA).

Opening remarks were made by COL Metcalf, Commander, Albuquerque District (SPA), who hosted the conference. The first speaker was BG Madsen, Commander of South Pacific Division (SPD). BG Madsen aligned his talk with the Chief of Engineer's vision of communications, process, and people.

(1) BG Madsen showed his collection of IT devices (cell phone, laptop computer, and Palm Pilot) and complained of his inability to make efficient use of these new methods of communicating. They are inevitably replaced before he can learn them due to rapid advances in technology. These comments lead to a discussion of strategic communications and the Corps' poor showing in this area. He gave the example of a series of newspaper articles detailing government efforts in environmental restoration. The Corps was completely omitted. The authors knew nothing of our efforts in this area. He contends that the Corps must do better at strategic communications and that IM must lead the charge on the implementation side.

(2) BG Madsen then spoke of a conference where all the Division Commanders (General Officers) were left in a room by themselves with nothing to do. The ensuing spontaneous discussion took 15 minutes to come to the consensus among the generals that business processes should be the Corps' number one priority. From this BG Madsen concludes that the P2 project should be managed by HQ and properly funded rather than be a burden on HNC. His contention is that commanders need better tools with which to make decisions. In addition Information Assurance (IA) is becoming increasingly important. He is hiring an "Information Warrior" to fight hackers and viruses.

(3) SPD has a 15% vacancy rate and new folks are getting harder to find. We are not doing well in the recruiting wars and the regionalization of HR has hurt the process. 70% of his hires are from inside the Corps, which only moves the problem around. Training is important for advancing young talent and begs the question, "How do we make the Corps a learning organization?" He contends that we need more civilian leadership training, and that EVERYONE should Project Management 101.

(4) He wanted us (IM) to consider three things:

(a) We should not be a stovepipe; we should be part of a multidisciplinary team.

(b) We must make decisions and deploy systems even if we know something better is coming. He believes in an 80% solution today is better than a 100% solution sometime in the future.

(c) When we deploy a system, do it well and completely, including training. He gave the example of CEFMS. When it was deployed, you could get training but today the only way to learn CEFMS is by sitting with an existing expert.

(5) The last point BG Madsen made was his unhappiness with decisions made by/at HQUSACE that affect his resources, time, and people without any input from him.

Corporate Information Campaign Plan:

Mr. Berrios (CIO) opened his presentation with remarks about the Chief's vision of people, process, and communications.   To real the Chief's vision IM's Mission Statement is directed at:

"Fully leverage Information Technology products and services throughout the Corps"

The briefing shifted to Information Assurance (IA) as an area of increasing importance throughout the Army.   Every Monday at their staff meeting, the Vice-Chief of Staff of the Army (VCSA) asks all the MACOM commanders (or deputies) about IA issued that occurred the previous week and what they have done about them. The VCSA is told by DISA about every hack of an Army system.

In the area of corporate network capabilities, Mr. Berrios outlined areas that are being evaluated to improve network

responsiveness and reliability. Consolidation of web servers using a regional approach was one area being considered to improve network performance and reduce costs. The bulk of the network traffic is internet.

Mr. Berrios especially mentioned W2K migration. He says we should have W2K on desktops by the end of FY'02 and on servers by the end of FY'03. This is brought up again in both the W2K Active Directory Deployment presentation and the W2K Working Group presentation. In a private conversation, Sam Bradley mentioned that HNC was the ONLY organization, of the 14 test sites, not represented at the W2K conference they held in DC this past May. We need to be at the next one. Also on this slide, Sondra Charlton is working on a BPA type contract to provide a wide range of products and services similar to the old CEAP-1A contract. This should be available very soon and will contain a Certification Authority line item(s).

The CIO noted that there is a nation-wide shortage of 435,000 IT workers. He wants us to start reclassifying people according to the 2200 series standards ASAP. Incentive pay will appear for 2200 series GS-13s. Get people trained. Emerging leaders should have PM and acquisition training too. Encourage flextime and flexiplace where appropriate.

Terry Patton gave the next presentation, which was on P2. At this writing, his slides had not been posted on the conference website. His presentation was not greeted with much enthusiasm.

P2 is to be fielded in October of 2002. This system is being developed in Oracle with Primavera Project Planner Enterprise Edition (P3e) being the network activity system (NAS). The P2 assigned Project number will replace Project Numbers in all other Corps systems.

There was a short demo on how you set up a project in P2 during which Mr. Berrios expressed concerned that P3e was nothing more than an expensive NAS.

The next presentation was on the Enterprise Management System Pilot Test and was given by Jim Chestnut (SAD) and Dennis Boykin of NCI Information Systems.

The EMS Pilot is a test of Unicenter TNG as a method of leveraging IT personnel and resources across the Corps. Presently the Center uses Microsoft SMS product to manage our IT environment. If the Corps employs Unicenter as its EMS, sites such as HNC will continue to use SMS which can coexist with this product. As with SMS, Unicenter provides inventory control, helpdesk capabilities, and enforces configuration control down to the desktop level.

Windows 2000 Active Directory Deployment presented by Sam Bradley. See encl 3.

The Corps has been working towards developing a deployment model for implementing Windows 2000 across the Corps. During the presentation Mr. Bradley pointed out that plans call for reducing the number of domains from 200+ to approximately 10. Note also that we (HNC) are under the HQ/FOA domain and that all the labs are under the CEERD domain.

The Corps attempted to setup a Single Domain Model for the entire enterprise but failed resulting in the Multiple Domain Model that proved to be more successful. During the briefing Mr. Bradley noted that Microsoft's WXP will be out soon which may replace W2K before it is fully implemented. More information will be coordinated with the field as we move closer to full deployment.

One of the main issues still being worked is Active Directory and how it will be deployed. Under the current proposal we will not be able to create a domain. This also seems to mean that there will be no servers outside the Corps-wide domain structure. Present Corps DNS and firewall structure precludes the Corps from being part of the Army W2K infrastructure. More on this later during the W2K Working Group report.

Dr. Peggy Wright
Network Modernization and CEEIS.

Dr. Wright briefed the audience on the CEEIS mission and functions in support the Corps corporate needs. During the presentation Dr. Wright addressed proposed changes on how costs will be distributed throughout the Corps. The costs breakdown for FY01 and FY02 were presented. The method of bill back was discussed on how costs will be captured from the field to pay for CEEIS. The Configuration Control Board (CCB) has decided, based on recommendations of a PAT, to bill based on user-ids beginning in FY'03. There is still much discussion on this issue for IAS costs.

Some of the CEEIS modernization initiatives addressed during the presentation were:

Upgrades to corporate servers used to support CEFMS, SPS, and PROMIS.

The Sitara™ caching server was mentioned. Note that this box is a huge help in bandwidth management.

CEEIS is in the process of upgrading the firewall software from 5.5 to 6.0. This will allow us GUI read only access to the system.

Virtual Private Networks (VPN) was addressed as it relates to an ever increasing requirement across the Corps.

Dial-in security is addressed. Note that HNC is RADIUS compliant and has host-based IDS running on our RADIUS server.

West Coast Gateway will be upgraded from 15Mbps to 45Mbps. This should improve our Internet access time.

Dr. Wright points out that the auditors, GAO/Price Waterhouse, were unable to break through our firewalls to access Corps' systems as part of their FISCAM audits of CEEIS.

Dr. Wright discussed the CCB, their work, and their priorities.

IT Capital Investment given by Ward Sevila.

This presentation consisted mainly of information detailing aspects of Corps IT costs and their distribution.

IT consumes 2-3% of the Corps' entire budget. According to the Gartner Group, IT consumes 6-7% of corporate America's budget. There was some discussion of whether the Corps figure includes all IT labor since the numbers come from ITIPS. HQ spends about 27% of all IT dollars. Highlights of some of the other information presented below:

Analysis: Infrastructure is consistently about 50% less than these IT types.

According to ITIPS that only 34% of all AISs costs are Command Standard systems with the rest of the costs being generated by local legacy systems.

Corps of Engineers Electronic Document Management System (CEEDMS) presented by Gary Maul.

Mr. Maul provided a brief history of EDMS in the Corps starting in 1996. It is worth noting that before 1996 HNC was told not to proceed with an EDMS system because one was coming called Optical Disk Imaging (ODI). The Corps is working on a contract vehicle which will be used by organizations to buy software and integration services. This will allow deployment at a pace that organizations can more readily afford. Based on the size of HNC, will are defined as a "medium" size site. The projected costs for a EDMS solution for the Center is approximately $2.7M.

DIM / CIM Conference Summary: Other important Information Technology initiatives that our being worked throughout the Corps was presented. Some of these programs include a replacement system for PROMIS called P2, Facility Equipment Maintenance System (FEM), CEFMS II, and a host of others. Closer control over people,

time, and money will become an operational imperative to maintain our competitive edge in the future. Though IT was the focal point of this conference it was evident that leveraging both IT and our capital to enhance our operational capabilities is taking on new importance across the government. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

Suggestions

If you would like to make a suggestion on how we can improve our services or would like to make a suggestion on ways to improve this letter please fill out our suggestion form. Click here ⊠

Suggestions